

Aortobifemoral Bypass: Before Your Surgery

What is an aortobifemoral bypass?

An aortobifemoral bypass is surgery to move blood flow around blocked blood vessels in your belly or groin area. This will increase blood flow to your legs. It may allow you to walk farther.

The doctor will use a blood vessel, called a graft, to bypass the blocked blood vessels. The graft will carry blood from the aorta to the femoral artery. This artery is in the groin area of each thigh. The aorta is the large blood vessel that carries blood from the heart to the blood vessels in the belly. The femoral arteries are large blood vessels that carry blood from the blood vessels in the belly to the legs.

The doctor will make a cut in your belly. He or she will also make a cut in your groin at the top of each thigh. These cuts are called incisions. The doctor will put the graft in your belly through the incisions. The graft is connected to the aorta and the femoral arteries. Stitches or staples are used to close the incisions.

You will probably spend 4 to 7 days in the hospital. You will need to take it easy for at least 4 to 6 weeks at home.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

What happens before surgery?

Surgery can be stressful. This information will help you understand what you can expect. And it will help you safely prepare for surgery.

Preparing for surgery

- Understand exactly what surgery is planned, along with the risks, benefits, and other options.
- Tell your doctors ALL the medicines, vitamins, supplements, and herbal remedies you take. Some of these can increase the risk of bleeding or interact with anesthesia.
- If you take blood thinners, such as warfarin (Coumadin), clopidogrel (Plavix), or aspirin, be sure to talk to your doctor. He or she will tell you if you should stop taking these medicines before your surgery. Make sure that you understand exactly what your doctor wants you to do.
- Your doctor will tell you which medicines to take or stop before your surgery. You may need to stop taking certain medicines a week or more before surgery. So talk to your doctor as soon as you can.
- If you have an advance directive, let your doctor know. It may include a living will and a durable power of attorney for health care. Bring a copy to the hospital. If you don't have one, you may want to prepare one. It lets your doctor and loved ones know your health care wishes. Doctors advise that everyone prepare these papers before any type of surgery or procedure.

What happens on the day of surgery?

- Follow the instructions exactly about when to stop eating and drinking. If you don't, your surgery may be canceled. If your doctor told you to take your medicines on the day of surgery, take them with only a sip of water.
- Take a bath or shower before you come in for your surgery. Do not apply lotions, perfumes, deodorants, or nail polish.
- Do not shave the surgical site yourself.
- Take off all jewelry and piercings. And take out contact lenses, if you wear them.

At the hospital or surgery center

- Bring a picture ID.
- The area for surgery is often marked to make sure there are no errors.
- You will be kept comfortable and safe by your anesthesia provider. You will be asleep during the surgery.
- The surgery will take about 2 to 3 hours.
- You will probably go to the intensive care unit (ICU) after surgery. You will probably stay in the ICU for 1 or 2 days before you go to your regular hospital room.

Going home

- Be sure you have someone to drive you home. Anesthesia and pain medicine make it unsafe for you to drive.
- You will be given more specific instructions about recovering from your surgery. They will cover things like diet, wound care, follow-up care, driving, and getting back to your normal routine.

When should you call your doctor?

- You have questions or concerns.
- You don't understand how to prepare for your surgery.
- You become ill before the surgery (such as fever, flu, or a cold).
- You need to reschedule or have changed your mind about having the surgery.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <http://www.healthwise.net/ed>

Enter **E454** in the search box to learn more about "**Aortobifemoral Bypass: Before Your Surgery.**"

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